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Civil Croatia on the Eve of the First World War (The Echo of the Assassination and Ultimatum)

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Introduction

The assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Francis Ferdinand and his wife Sophia Hohenberg in Sarajevo on 28th June 1914 was an event of world importance. It was not only a »usual« assassination of a crowned head similar to many in history, but it gave *casus belli* for the first great war of the twentieth century which engulfed almost the entire world. At the turn of the century the great powers of Europe were divided into two main opposing alliances looking for a motive for war. Several times they succeeded in avoiding war, but after the assassination at Sarajevo, war came and soon became the biggest human slaughterhouse ever seen in world history up to then.

What was being prepared in the political kitchens during the month between the assassination and the beginning of war is more or less clear. Historians have dealt with this question even from the time of war. In this article we will present the situation in Civil Croatia after the assassination up to the first days of the war, that is how the events of June and July 1914 affected the Croatian public.

In the elections for the Croatian Parliament of 16th December 1913 the Croatian-Serbian Coalition became the most powerful party in the Sabor (the Croatian parliament). These elections were not based on universal suffrage. Of a total of 88 seats in parliament the Croatian-Serbian Coalition obtained 48. Together with the Unionists (Magyrones)¹ it took possession of the right wing of the Sabor. In the centre there were the representatives of the Frank Party of Rights (Frankovci), three representatives of the Croatian People's Peasant Party and

They were pro-Hungarian and firmly supported connections with Budapest.

three independent representatives. The left wing consisted of representatives of the Starčević Party of Rights (Milinovci or Starčevićanci).²

The Croatian-Serbian Coalition had an absolute majority in the Sabor and could, without any problems, control Croatian politics. But the opposition was very forceful and obstructed the Sabor's first session. During the winter and spring of 1914 the Sabor debated, among other things, the King's address, the agreement between Tisza and the Coalition, and issues to do with the Nagodba (Agreement or Compromise), indemnity, the budget for 1914/1915, etc.³

The Assassination at Sarajevo and its Repercussions for Croatia

In the summer of 1914 the Austro-Hungarian army held manoeuvres in Bosnia under the supervision of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne and Inspector general of the army. At the end of the manoeuvres he and his wife Sophia Hohenberg went to Sarajevo. An awful fate awaited them in the Bosnian capital: the Austro-Hungarian royal couple was killed there by a young Serbian nationalist.

The first attempt to assassinate Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, by Nedeljko Čabrinović, was not successful. Čabrinović threw a bomb into the Archduke's car, but it did not explode immediately and Ferdinand managed to throw the bomb out. However, he did not avoid death. The second assailant, 19-year old Gavrilo Princip, succeeded in killing him and his wife.

Both Čabrinović and Princip, along with a third conspirator, Trifko Grabež, were members of the secret society »Young Bosnia« and fanatical student revolutionaries. There were revolutionary young people like them in every backward European country in those days, and in western Europe several decades earlier. It would not have been difficult to persuade them to carry out an assassination.

It is true that »the full story of the Sarajevo assassination has yet to be told and, in spite of much learned research, many vital points remain obscure«.⁴ What is well known is that the assassination was organized by the Serbian secret organization »Union or Death« (more widely known as the »Black Hand«). This organization was founded on 3rd March 1911, to achieve a Greater Serbia by means of violence, conspiracy and terrorism. The head of the organization was Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, Chief of the Intelligence Bureau of the Serb General Staff, who had assassinated King Aleksandar Obrenović in 1903.

² Bogdan Krizman, *Hrvatska u prvom svjetskom ratu. Hrvatsko-srpskipolitički odnosi* (Zagreb, 1989) p. 27.

³ For more details see: Krizman, *Hrvatska*, pp. 29-50.

⁴ L. C. F. Turner, *Origins of the First World War* (London, 1970) p. 78.

The Croatian Press on the Assassination

The news about the assassination came to Zagreb very quickly and caused excitement and confusion. Some hours later special editions of the local newspapers appeared. A journalist of *Ilustrovani list* described the events like this: »Real panic broke out in Zagreb when people heard about the assassination. They gathered on the streets, besieged the newspaper offices. When special editions were published, they were snatched up immediately. Some of the colporters were protected by the police. Up to 50,000 copies of a single newspaper were printed.«⁵

The headlines about the assassination show what individual newspapers stressed, what was the most important angle in their view. While some newspapers did not include in their headlines who the assassins were, others clearly stressed that they were Serbs, depending on the newspaper's politics. Thus the official newspaper *Narodne novine* brought the news from Sarajevo under the heading: »The assassination of His Royal Highness the Serene Lord Archduke - the heir apparent to the throne Francis Ferdinand and his wife Duchess Sophia Hohenberg«. In the article it noted that the assassins were Serbs,⁶ but it did not stress strongly their connections with Serbia.⁷

Starcevic's followers' newspaper *Hrvat* had a very short and simple headline: »t Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia«. The greater part of the first page of *Hrvat* was devoted to the deathnotice, and only on the second page were there some words about the assassins - that both of them were Serbs.⁸

There was a similarly short headline in *Hrvatskipokret*, the organ of the Croatian Independent Party: »Assassination in Sarajevo. Francis Ferdinand and his wife Hohenberg are murdered«. In this newspaper, which supported South Slav unification, there was confused information about the assassins, such as: »While some say Cabrunovic is Muslim and Princip is Orthodox, according to others the former is Muslim and the latter is Catholic. According to official reports one cannot say anything about the religion of the assassins. Both Princip and Cabrunovic, as Herzegovinans, are Catholics (sic!).«⁹ Only this newspaper did not mention the nationality but the religious affiliation of the assassins. It even strongly asserted that both of them were Catholics.

There was a completely different headline in Frankovci's newspaper *Hrvatska*. In bold print it said: »The murder of the heir apparent to the throne and his wife in Sarajevo«, and immediately after this in smaller print the subtitles: »Both assassins are sly Serbs. Bombs from Belgrade. Demonstrations in Zagreb. Bitterness against Serbs in the provinces. Protests against Serbs in Vienna. Mass arrests

⁵ *Ilustrovani list* 27 (Zagreb, 4.VII.1914.) nr. 632.

⁶ The name of Cubrilovic was written by mistake as Gavrilovic.

⁷ *Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 146.

⁸ *Hrvat* (Zagreb, 30.VI.1914) nr. 300.

⁹ *Hrvatskipokret* (Zagreb, 28.VI.1914) nr. 176. The name of Cabrinovic was written by mistake as Cabrunovic.

in Sarajevo. Impressions from the world.« This newspaper stressed several times on the title page that the assassins were Serbs.¹⁰

In its obituaries every newspaper described the assassination as an awful crime and presented the assassins as criminals. Some newspapers used less violent words and did not accuse all Serbs. Others, on the contrary, used very strong words against the Serbs, implying that they were all guilty for the crime in Sarajevo.

The official *Narodne novine* notified that the news of the »heartless crime« had deep repercussions throughout the entire country. Because of the lack of reliable news *Narodne novine* did not give any opinion on the »vicious crime«. It hoped the investigation would show all circumstances in relation to the assassination.¹¹

The semi-official newspaper *Jutarnji list* published its obituary two days after the »loathsome, even unscrupulous act« and asserted that the entire nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina could not be blamed for this crime. The newspaper expressed regret regarding demonstrations which were out of control. It was stressed that it was the Croats who had to be sorry for the death of Francis Ferdinand, »a sincere friend of our people«.¹²

Similarly, the mouthpiece of the Starcevic Party of Rights, *Hrvat*, described Croatian grief and pain after the »deplorable event« in Sarajevo. It mourned for the Archduke and his wife asserting that together with them many Croatian hopes had died.¹³

Hrvatski pokret, the mouthpiece of the Croatian Independent Party, noted that the unexpected and terrible news would make a deep impression on the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes, who were very saddened by the terrible event which took place in the centre of Sarajevo.¹⁴ The political orientation of this newspaper was directed not only to a united and independent Croatia, but also to a unified South Slav state.

The most violent obituary was to be found in Frankovci's newspaper *Hrvatska*. It stressed that the Croats, more than other nations, regreted the »bloody crime of Sarajevo« which was committed by »fanatical criminals«. In its notice *Hrvatska* wrote emphatically: »Both of the criminals are fanatical Serbs, sons of this cursed tribe which everywhere spreads hatred, slaughter and murder, which, seeking power, infamously demolishes everything before it, imagining that in this way it will intimidate the Croatian nation«.¹⁵

The notice of death written in *Srbobran*, the main Serbian newspaper in Croatia, stressed that the assassination was »a punishable act of individuals who did not

¹⁰ *Hrvatska* (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 794.

¹¹ *Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 146.

¹² *Jutarnji list* 3 (Zagreb, 1.VII.1914) nr. 702

¹³ *Hrvat* (Zagreb, 30.VI.1914) nr. 300.

¹⁴ *Hrvatski pokret* (Zagreb, 28.VI.1914) nr. 176

¹⁵ *Hrvatska* (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 794.

have any connections with the social life of the neighbourhood in which they were living«, and an isolated act of one anarchist, that is of one fighter against imperialism. Also *Srbobran* asserted that the Serbian people did not have any common links with the assassination, and Serbs were loyal and faithful to the Habsburg dynasty and deeply mourned for the Archduke.¹⁶

While all other newspapers expressed their regret for what happened to the Archduke and his wife, the socialist newspaper *Slobodna riječ* wrote something completely different. In its opinion Austro-Hungarian politics were the reason for the assassination: »Austro-Hungary is a very reactionary state. Francis Ferdinand was a representative of reaction and clericalism, and for this reason the clerical elements are now frustrated and furious - not from sincere causes, but from political speculation. Who could even imagine that Austro-Hungary would become a progressive state of liberty and equality merely because Francis Ferdinand has been killed? Really nobody! Not changes in the highest places, but changes in social and national relations within this state alone could cause a change in the course of the governments¹⁷

Demonstrations in Croatia

Already in the evening of 28th June 1914 demonstrations took place in Zagreb and other Croatian towns. They began as mournful processions, but soon turned into anti-Serbian demonstrations led by the Frankovci. However, the demonstrations in Croatia were not so forceful as similar ones in Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where some people were killed or badly injured.

A mournful procession started in Zagreb in the early evening of 28th June. After a while some people began to shout anti-Serbian slogans. That evening the situation was kept under control and people soon dispersed. The majority of newspapers condemned the demonstrations. Only *Hrvatska* had very positive words about them, which is quite understandable as the Frankovci were the loudest demonstrators.¹⁸

The next day, 29th June 1914 the situation was different. The Frankovci were once again at the head of the mournful procession. They carried a picture of Francis Ferdinand and the Croatian flag with a black ribbon. After somebody outside the procession had thrown a stone at the picture, the demonstrators demolished the People's coffee-house on Jelačić square, and smashed windows in the flat of the Serbian merchant Dučić, and the house of Zagreb's mayor, Janko Holjac, and several other houses. The demonstrations died down about midnight.

As political polarization in Zagreb had come to a head, and there was a real possibility of larger-scale conflicts, the municipal authorities prohibited all meet-

¹⁶*Srbobran* (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 131.

¹⁷*Slobodna riječ* (Zagreb, 30.VI.1914) nr. 145.

¹⁸*Hrvatska* (Zagreb, 29.VI.1914) nr. 794.

ings without special permission.¹⁹ Neither the Frankovci nor the Coalitionists were satisfied with the activity of the Zagreb police. Whilst the former asserted that the police was persecuting them, the latter complained that the police were passive.²⁰ The socialist newspaper *Slobodna riječ* also remarked that the police were passive, even saying that the demonstrators were under their patronage. It asserted that individual policemen encouraged the demonstrators and that »everything that happened in Zagreb was very similar to anti-Serbian demonstrations in September 1902«. ²¹

The Socialists organized a public rally against anti-Serbian demonstrations on Sunday, 5th July 1914. Since the police did not permit this rally on the main square, it was held at the Aleksić' inn in Frankopanska street. About 1,000 people acclaimed the resolution passed by the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia on the assassination and its consequences. The demonstrations against Serbs and the police-system in Civil Croatia were condemned: »(...) police absolutism is the people's greatest enemy. All absolutistic police-institutions must be suspended and political rights of the people established, especially universal suffrages²²

Demonstrations against Serbs took place throughout Croatia. They were more prominent in Eastern Slavonia and Srijem where Greater Serbian propaganda was more powerful and more dangerous than in other parts of Croatia. In this way demonstrations in Zemun, Vukovar, Vinkovci, Đakovo, and Slavonski Brod challenged the wider interests of both the Croatian and the local authorities. It was necessary to stop them and to prevent destruction. For this reason the local authorities in these areas, as well as in Zagreb, banned public gatherings.

The Croatian press reacted to the demonstrations in the same way it had reacted to the assassination, that is the various newspapers described them very differently. The majority of newspapers, both official and opposition, condemned the demonstrations as very harmful for Croatia, and called for dignified behaviour. *Hrvatski pokret* wrote that the crime of Sarajevo had already produced evil fruit - the hatred of some of the Croatian people for the Serbs. It asserted that the assassination was an act of individuals and was not to be identified with all Serbs in the Monarchy.²³ *Narodno jedinstvo* pleaded for appeasement of the situation in Croatia. It asserted that »the Croats cannot permit the identification of 'Serbism' with high treason and murder, just as the Serbs cannot permit the identification of 'Croatism' with servitude. In this way the Croats have to be with the Serbs, and the Serbs with the Croats, and they have to protect each other from defamation and profanation, from power and poison.«²⁴

¹⁹ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 2.VII.1914) nr. 180.

²⁰ *Hrvat* (Zagreb, 30.VI.1914) nr. 300.

²¹ *Slobodna riječ* (Zagreb, 30.VI.1914) nr. 145.

"Slobodna riječ (Zagreb, 6.VII.1914) nr. 150.

²³ *Hrvatski pokret* (Zagreb, 1.VII.1914) nr. 178.

²⁴ *Narodno jedinstvo* (Zagreb, 4.VII.1914) nr. 25

On the other hand, some newspapers, especially *Hrvatska*, approved the demonstrations with strong words against the Serbs. However, anti-Serbian demonstrations did not only take place in Croatia but throughout the Monarchy. Large demonstrations took place in Vienna, Budapest, and other Austro-Hungarian centres. In the evening of 2nd July, several thousands of people gathered in Vienna and demonstrated against the Serbs and the Kingdom of Serbia. Near St. Paul's Church they burned the Serbian flag, and they wanted to take down the flag from the Serbian embassy. Many Serbs of Vienna, mostly citizens of the Kingdom of Serbia, lost their jobs and moved to Serbia.²⁵

The Storm in the Sabor

The assassination in Sarajevo caused a major row in the Croatian Sabor. During the session of 30th June, presided over by Bogdan Medakovic,²⁶ the Frankovci offended and insulted representatives of the Coalition. Namely, they had expected that Francis Ferdinand would introduce Trialism to the Monarchy and his death very much affected them. When Medakovic was still opening the session, one could hear the exclamations: »Stop! The Croatian-Serbian Coalition cannot make a declaration of loyalty! Down with the killers and accomplices! Out with Pribicevic, out with all Vlachs!«.²⁷ The Frankovci made a deafening noise while Medakovic was reading the minutes. Their leader Ivo Frank summoned all Croats to leave the Coalition shouting: »Out with Karadjordjevic and his cursed dynasty!«.²⁸

Medakovic tried to read his commemorative speech but he was thwarted by these exclamations and the session was interrupted for a while. However the same situation was repeated when it continued. The Frankovci made noise, clattered and shouted. Here are only a few examples of what they thought of the Croatian-Serbian Coalition and its politics, about the Serbs and the Serbian question: »Out with the Serbs! Down with Karadjordjevic! Glory to Ferdinand! Down with Serbian propaganda! Sir Ban, dismiss the Croatian Sabor - we take over responsibility before the nation! No Serb, no Coalitionist shall speak! If you search their pockets, you will find bombs! We must square accounts with the Serbs in Croatia! Down with Serbia!«.²⁹

Medakovic again interrupted the session. After that he succeeded in saying a short commemoration. Of course, the Frankovci were not passive, but they shouted as before. Every now and then one of them shouted and offended either

²⁵*Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 4.VII.1914) nr. 151.

²⁶ Bogdan Medakovic, President of the Croatian Sabor and President of the Serbian People's Independent Party.

²⁷Svetozar Pribicevic, the main political figure among the Serbs in Croatia. - Quoted from: Krizman, *Hrvatska*, p. 72.

²⁸ Krizman, *Hrvatska*, p. 72.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 73.

the Coalitionists or all Serbs. During the whole session the Coalitionists kept their temper and did not oppose the outrages. Only Đuro Šurmin tried to help President Medaković and asked for peace in the parliament building.

The next session was held on 6th July 1914. It was led by Pero Magdić, the first vice-president and mayor of Varaždin. At the beginning of the session Ivo Frank accused Magdić of being a murderer and having organized a plot against Josip Frank, the founder of the Pure Party of Rights. Although Magdić led the session very vigorously and threatened the Frankovci, he had to interrupt it. After a pause Count Miroslav Kulmer suggested a way to punish the Frankovci. The representatives I. Frank, A. Horvat and I. Zatluka were excluded from the next 60 sessions, S. Vučetić and V. Prebeg from the next 30 sessions, and F. Novak, V. Kiš, J. Milković, S. Pavunić and T. Jalžabetić (a member of the Croatian People's Peasant Party) were punished with rigorous censure.

Just as during the June 30th session the Frankovci aimed angry words at the Coalitionists, but this time the Coalitionists did not refuse to answer. From both sides there were heard words such as: »Hungarian rakes«, »pigs in a pig-sty«, »kike's bastard« (for Ivo Frank), »counterfeiters«, »dogcatchers«, »old sow«.³⁰

When the Sabor adopted the suggested penalties by a majority, the representatives of the Frank Party of Rights demonstratively left the session. Some minutes later Magdić took the floor from Vinko Lovreković, a representative of the Croatian People's Peasant Party, and Lovreković and Jalžabetić also left the parliament building.

After that the Sabor continued its work and debated the budget. Svetozar Pribičević explained why it was important to accept the budget: »It is in Croatian interests to preserve the present political situation, that it may not become worse«.³¹ Also, he dealt with the Frankovci's obstruction of the Sabor's session considering that their behavior was »even humiliating for the dignity of the Sabor and the nation, at precisely one of the most serious moments in recent time«.³² The Sabor's session was concluded on 13th July 1914, and the next opened eleven months later, on 14th June 1915.

Behind Closed Doors

On 11th July 1914 the Croatian government asked for the reports on feelings about the newly arisen situation after the assassination and about the activities of the Narodna odbrana (Society of National Defence) in Croatia.³³ The Narodna odbrana was a legal society first formed in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the an-

³⁰ Ibid., p. 82.

³¹ Ibid., p. 86.

³² Ibid., p. 87.

³³ Hrvatski državni arhiv u Zagrebu, Predsjedništvo zemaljske vlade (to be referred to hereafter by the initials HDA, PrZV), b. 800, nr. 3899.

nexation-crisis in 1908-1909. Although it had official connections with the Serbian government in Belgrade, the Austro-Hungarian authority did not prohibited its activities.

Soon after the request for reports, these began to arrive in Zagreb from the various districts. Many of them showed the assassination had an painful effect on the population of Croatia, even where the majority of the inhabitants were Serbs, and that the Narodna odbrana did not function in Croatia. Rare were reports like this one from Osijek, where it was asserted: »I cannot reliably conclude that the deplorable event was painful to the Serbs, although they took part in all mournful manifestations in remembrance of the deceased couple. These are strong bold words, and damning for one nation, but this nation every day offers irrefutable proof for this serious accusation«.³⁴

The reports about the general situation in the districts and the activities of the Narodna odbrana were not in accordance with many individual police reports which showed how a certain section of the Serbian population in Croatia approved the assassination. People from every social stratum and of different ages, both men and women, from the whole of Croatia, expressed their approval of the murder of Francis Ferdinand. Often they used very strong words expressing their impression of it. Here are some examples of how Serbs from Croatia approved of the assassination at Sarajevo.

Nikola Utvić from Jamena, a village in Srijem, asserted that the assassins: »had to kill that old bald Emperor«, meaning it was necessary to kill Francis Joseph.³⁵ Speaking about the assassination Mileva Popović from Podravska Slatina said: »it's a pity they didn't kill him (Francis Ferdinand) earlier«.³⁶ Even prisoners couldn't keep calm and approved of the assassination, for example Mico Pilipović, a prisoner at Lepoglava. After he had heard about the death of Francis Ferdinand, he jumped and shouted: »Long live the man who killed him. May God bless his hand. Long live King Petar and Serbia.«³⁷ A teacher from Veliki Grdevac told his pupils that he who kills a member of a dynasty becomes famous and his name goes down in history.³⁸ Milka Čučković from Slavonski Brod approved of the assassination and even said: »If I had my way, I would cut all Croats and Magyars into pieces for stewed meat«.³⁹

Some people were not content with words alone but also showed their satisfaction with Francis Ferdinand's murder by shooting guns. Thus a certain inn-keeper Mica Kranjčević fired from her house in Brlog near Otočac. The police found several guns and five Serbian flags there. She didn't admit she had fired

³⁴ HDA, PrZV, b. 800. nr. 58 Res./1914.

³⁵ HDA, PrZV, b. 800, nr. 4692.

³⁶ HDA, PrZV, b. 800, nr. 74 Res./1914.

³⁷ HDA, PrZV, b. 818, nr. 5035.

³⁸ HDA, PrZV, b. 800, nr. 4660.

³⁹ HDA, PrZV, b. 822, nr. 5381.

a shot, but some witnesses asserted she did, and a court of law condemned her to 30 days of prison and 100 crowns fine.⁴⁰

The assassination accelerated the disintegration of some mixed marriages. A certain Bara Kljaic, a Croat female from Srijemska Mitrovica came to the town's police-station and denounced her husband Stojan (a Serb) who approved of the assassination, carrying a picture of the Serbian King Petar Karadjordjevic, and saying: »Do you know to whom it (Croatia) will belong in a few years, to King Petar or to our King?« After this denunciation Stojan Kljaic was arrested.⁴¹

Peace of Mind

After several days of excitement and demonstrations the political situation in Croatia appeased and life returned to normal. Of course, as is visible from the previous section, the effects of the assassination were felt in everyday life during the entire period up to the beginning of war. However, later they were not felt so strongly as in the first days of July. The newspapers regularly reported on the investigations in Sarajevo and showed the complicity of the Kingdom of Serbia in the assassination. Slowly the atmosphere for a war option was created. Nevertheless, one cannot say that the press in general loudly propagated war.

Very soon after the assassination one brochure about Francis Ferdinand was published, as well as postcards showing scenes from his life.⁴² At the same time the process of renaming streets after Francis Ferdinand began in certain settlements such as Virovitica, Osijek and others.⁴³

The Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum and the Beginning of War

During the next five weeks after the assassination investigations took place in Sarajevo. They showed that Serbia was involved in this act, not only indirectly but also directly: the bombs and guns had come from the Serbian military arsenal and the assassins were trained in Serbia.

One can observe two main reactions to the assassination and further Austro-Hungarian policy toward Serbia. While Francis Joseph and the Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza were opposed to war with Serbia, the Chief of Staff Conrad von Hotzendorf was a leading figure of the war faction. In the assassination Hotzendorf saw sufficient reason for a proclamation of a preventive war against Serbia. After Vienna obtained the German promise of support in case of a war, the

⁴⁰ HDA, PrZV, b. 813, nrs. 4252 and 4869.

⁴¹ HDA, PrZV, b. 800, nr. 3929.

⁴² V. Rudolf-Rucović, *Nadvojvoda Franjo Ferdinand 18.XII. 1863.-28. VI. 1914* (Sisak, 1914). See also: *Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 4.VII.1914) nr. 151.

⁴³ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 3.VII.1914) nr. 181. HDA, PrZV, b. 801, nr. 4863.

war faction won and Tisza changed his opinion. It was only necessary to find the right form in which to proclaim war.

An unacceptable ultimatum seemed the best way, and it was given to the Serbian government on 23rd July. It consisted of ten points. Amongst others, Vienna demanded that Serbia suppress every publication and activity against Austro-Hungary, to dissolve the society Narodna odbrana, to remove from military service and from the administration all officers and officials who were guilty of having taken part in propaganda against Austro-Hungary and to accept Austro-Hungarian assistance in Serbia in the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy. Although Foreign Minister Berchtold feared that Serbia would accept all these claims, it was completely impossible for it to accept the one which demanded a common judicial enquiry against all those who had taken part in the plot, if they were to be found on Serbian territory. In this case the Viennese authorities wanted to send delegates who would take an active part in the investigation. The Serbian government could not agree to such an annulment of Serbian independence and to permit a foreign judicial investigation on its territory. Therefore the Serbian reply on 25th July was negative. Serbia accepted all points of the ultimatum apart from this one. The Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Belgrade Wladimir Giesl obtained the Serbian response and, finding it unsatisfactory, broke diplomatic relations and left the Serbian capital. It was the beginning of the First World War.

The Croatian Press on the Ultimatum

According to *Neue Freie Presse*, on 22nd July 1914 *Narodne novine* described what the demarche to Serbia prepared by the Austro-Hungarian government might contain. The journalist justified the necessity of such an act: »(...) but it is also so natural that our Monarchy must demand that Serbia undertake everything necessary to stop the permanent unrest in our southern regions which is a result of the ruthless propaganda continuously led from Belgrade.« Simply, he concluded, this propaganda must be removed, and Austro-Hungary was pleading for peace.⁴⁴ In the text »On the eve of the demarche in Belgrade«, published on 23rd July 1914, *Narodne novine* published foreign press-reports on the future development of the crisis. There was discussion as to whether war was inevitable or was it possible to avoid it, and which of the great powers would range themselves with the conflicting states, Austro-Hungary and Serbia.⁴⁵

Over the following days it became clear that war could not be avoided. After the ultimatum of 23rd July all the press in Croatia expressed full support for the decision of the Viennese government. Certain newspapers were forbidden: the socialist newspapers *Slobodna rijec*, *Oslobodjenje*, *Pravo naroda* and *Volksrecht*, the

⁴⁴ *Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 22.VII.1914) nr. 166.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (Zagreb, 23.VII.1914) nr. 167.

Serbian newspapers *Srbsko kolo*, *Privrednik* and *Sloboda*, and other newspapers such as *Narodno jedinstvo*, *Vihor*, *Syjedost* and *Hrvatski branik*.⁴⁶

Narodne novine wrote that the ultimatum caused a very strong impression in Croatia, as well as among other peoples of the Monarchy. It asserted that »unbreakable connections* joined these peoples together and the Monarchy was not a »rotten artifact« as the Serbian press stated.⁴⁷ During the following days this official newspaper changed its exterior appearance, that is it was transformed into a kind of bulletin in which proclamations and orders were published. *Narodne novine* were even published several times per day. In some places it continued to publish normal journalistic texts, but the majority of it consisted of official texts.

Thus the special edition of 26th July 1914 brought only two items of news printed in very large letters. One was about the partial mobilization of the army and the second about the war collection.⁴⁸ Already on the next day, on 27th July, *Narodne novine* published a special edition with »Exceptional measures in a case of war« and many of the Ban's orders. Then it was completely clear that war would be declared. Among others, the Ban prohibited the emigration of conscripts as well as the distribution of passports to them, limited the right to travel across state borders, introduced police supervision of the press, and abolished the law of 1875 on rights of congregating.⁴⁹ On the same day an article was published: »Between war and peace«. The journalist justified the Austro-Hungarian step towards war, asserting that the Monarchy had for a long time patiently endured Serbian propaganda. Twice the Monarchy had been close to war, but avoided it. In spite of this, Serbia continued its propaganda which culminated in the assassination in Sarajevo. Now there was going to be a war and the peoples of the Monarchy were enthusiastic about the decision of their ruler and the government. *Narodne novine* wrote: »The war which approaches is not aggressive in nature, but rather it is defensive in character against the disruptive tendencies which have appeared in Serbia against the Monarchy; it has the character of a punitive expedition against plotters who threaten our peace and maybe also of retaliation against the perpetrators of a dispicable murder which destroyed the life of two noble and ambitious people.«⁵⁰

On the day after this article Austro-Hungary declared war against Serbia and began military activities. *Narodne novine* carried the manifesto of Francis Joseph (»To my peoples«) and the French original as well as the Croatian translation of the war-proclamation. It again repeated that the Monarchy was doing everything possible to avoid war. Now this was no longer possible and war would show the power and righteousness of Austro-Hungary, *Narodne novine* asserted.⁵¹

Ibid. (Zagreb, 27.VII.1914) nr. 170. *Hrvat* (Zagreb, 27.VII.1914) nr. 323.

Narodne novine 80 (Zagreb, 25.VII.1914) nr. 169.

Ibid. (Zagreb, 26.VII.1914) Special edition.

Ibid. (Zagreb, 27.VII.1914) nr. 170 Special edition.

Ibid. (Zagreb, 27.VII.1914) nr. 171.

Ibid. (Zagreb, 28.VII.1914) nr. 175.

A journalist of *Obzor* described how the situation in Zagreb was when the people were waiting for the Serbian reply. He wrote about the rumours that Serbia fully adopted all conditions of the ultimatum, that is that the Serbian answer was negative: »The impression was very vigorous. Many people gathered on the streets and discussed vigorously the possible consequences of the Serbian reply. After nine o'clock pro-war demonstrations began.« He also wrote how the people snatched up the special edition of the newspaper with the latest news from Belgrade and Zemun.⁵²

Describing the situation after the Ultimatum, *Srbobran* asserted that this was the greatest European crisis ever, and that war was a more probable possibility than a peaceful solution. It took into consideration every difficulty which could trap the Serbian people, and urged the Serbs to keep their temper: »To perform honourably and conscientiously all our civic duties and firmly accept dangers - this has been a quality of our people throughout history, and it also will be now.«⁵³ Although *Srbobran* was the main Serbian newspaper in Croatia and it was loyal to the government, soon after the beginning of war it reduced its number of pages and some weeks later ceased to be published.

The Beginning of War and the Organization of wartime Croatia

Francis Joseph ordered a partial mobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army on 25th July 1914. Two fifths of the Monarchy's forces were called to duty. At the same day Russia mobilized its troops. Confusing information about Russian military activity pushed Vienna into a declaration of war. On 28th July war was declared. The Foreign Minister Berchtold sent a short telegram to Belgrade: »Austro-Hungary considers herself from now on to be in a state of war with Serbia«. Already during the night between 28th and 29th July the Austro-Hungarian fleet and artillery from Zemun shelled Belgrade. Events began to succeed each other very quickly and after some days the whole of Europe was in »a state of war«.

Already on 27th July conscriptors began to arrive at the Zagreb barracks. The people met them with vigorous enthusiasm, saluting and cheering: »Long live the Croats!«, »Long live the Croatian army!«. The conscriptors greeted in return: »Long live the Croatian King!«, »Long live Croatia!«.⁵⁴ At the same time the Ban limited the activities of all public societies in Croatia.⁵⁵ Many of them immediately reacted to this order and asked for permission to continue their activities. Among those who obtained permission were the Croatian Society for the Protection of Public Health, all fire-brigades, the League for the Protection of Children in Zagreb, and some other providential and humanitarian societies. They obtained permission for their activities, but were limited in that they were not able to hold an-

⁵² *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 26.VII.1914) nr. 204.

⁵³ *Srbobran* (Zagreb, 12(25).VII.1914) nr. 154.

⁵⁴ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 28.VII.1914) nr. 206.

⁵⁵ HDA, PrZV, b. 816, nr. 4232.

nual meetings without a special permit.⁵⁶ On the other hand, sporting clubs such as the Croatian Falcon, the Serbian Falcon and similar, did not obtain permission.⁵⁷

Very soon after the outbreak of war the government organized humanitarian aid. On 1st August 1914 Count Miroslav Kulmer was appointed main organizer of humanitarian aid. Some days later, on 5th August, Count Marko Pejacevic became his deputy.⁵⁸ Also, a Committee for the organization of voluntary military hospital service was founded. This Committee sought nurses, that is women between 20 and 45 years of age who had at least finished elementary school, and assistants who knew how to read and write.⁵⁹ Health and auxiliary services were organized in many ways. The Sisters of Mercy nuns founded a home in Zagreb for children whose parents were mobilized.⁶⁰ At the same time, women from the upper and middle classes were responding themselves to the call to hospital service. In Zagreb alone 48 of them were registered for this duty.⁶¹ The office of the Red Cross in Vukovar organized facilities for wounded soldiers.⁶² Similar facilities were organized by other societies, for instance by the Merchant-Artisan Chamber of Zagreb.⁶³

During the whole period after the assassination rumours were common. They became more frequent after the ultimatum and in the first days of war. For instance a rumour that Zagreb's water-supply was poisoned spread throughout the town on 27th July 1914. Immediately the following day it was denied and the newspapers carried a report by the municipal health-office that the water-supply could not be poisoned.⁶⁴ Also, on 28th July 1914 one rumour spread through Jasenovac, a village on the mouth of river Una, where it flows into the river Sava, that two unknown persons wanted to demolish the bridges in Jasenovac and Dubica.⁶⁵ Because of such rumours the Ban strictly forbade the spreading of rumours and ordered that people who spread them should be punished either by prison or fines. This actually happened and some people paid fines. The money was paid to a fund for war-orphan.⁶⁶

⁵⁶ HDA, PrZV, b. 816, nr. 4544 and following.

⁵⁷ HDA, PrZV, b. 816, nr. 5284.

⁵⁸ HDA, PrZV, b. 821, nrs. 4641 and 4814.

⁵⁹ HDA, PrZV, b. 821, nr. 5367.

⁶⁰ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 28.VII.1914) nr. 206.

⁶¹ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 29.VII.1914) nr. 207.

⁶² HDA, PrZV, b. 821, nr. 4815.

⁶³ HDA, PrZV.b. 821.

⁶⁴ *Obzor* 55 (Zagreb, 28.VII.1914) nr. 206.

⁶⁵ HDA, PrZV, b. 818, nr. 4508.

⁶⁶ HDA, PrZV, b. 822, nr. 5470.

Whilst the Croats accepted the declaration of war with vigorous enthusiasm, in some of the Serbian population in Croatia there was an atmosphere of rebellion after war against the Kingdom of Serbia had been declared.⁶⁷ Even the Magyars from Daruvar sent a memorandum to the Croatian government about the danger threatening the Magyar population around this settlement from the Serbs. They wrote that »there are many signs that they (Serbs from in and around Daruvar) are very well organized enemies of Hungary, who are waiting for an opportunity to begin their revolutionary activity«. ⁶⁸ This atmosphere was the reason for the arrests of many Serbs throughout Croatia, as well as in Southern Hungary. Serbian deserters who had escaped from the Serbian army during the Balkan Wars were arrested along with numerous local Serbs. They were sent to camps founded far from the borders with Serbia. Soon after this many people - wives, parents, childrens, relatives, and even neighbours, asked either for these prisoners to be released or moved to nearer settlements.⁶⁹

As soon as the war broke out problems with the food supply became apparent. During July food-prices were stable,⁷⁰ but in the first days of the war they rose quickly. The growth of food-prices was greater in the region near the front, such as Osijek.⁷¹ The municipal authorities of this Slavonian capital therefore froze food-prices.⁷²

Conclusion

The conflict between Austro-Hungary and Serbia after the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo in the early summer of 1914 soon led to the First World War. Although its causes were many and profound, it was actually triggered off by the Serbian involvement in the assassination. The investigation carried out into the perpetrators of the crime and their collaborators proved that the conspiracy and the murder itself were plotted in Belgrade political circles.

Immediately after the news of the assassination came to Zagreb and other Croatian settlements demonstrations against the Serbs took place. The excitement continued for several days and was supported by some political parties, primarily by the Frankovci and their press. On the other hand, the Social-Democratic Party and the parties which campaigned for what they called a »Union of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovene nation« opposed the demonstrations and even organized their members against the demonstrators.

HDA, PrZV, b. 817, nrs. 4348, 4727 and following.

⁶⁸ HDA, PrZV, b. 817, nr. 4999.

⁶⁹ HDA, PrZV, b. 812, 814 and 815.

⁷⁰ *Narodne novine* 80 (Zagreb, 4.VII.1914) nr. 151. Ibid. (Zagreb, 17.VII.1914) nr. 162. *Srienske novine* (Vukovar, July 1914).

⁷¹ Table of food-prices in Osijek, July-August 1914. HDA, PrZV, b. 820 nr. 5239.

⁷² HDA, PrZV, b. 820, nr. 5239.

The demonstrations which covered the whole of Croatia were not directed only against the Serbian population or followers of the idea of a South Slav unification, but also against members of the ruling Croatian-Serbian Coalition. Therefore it is not clear why the police were passive and didn't protect them enough.

The Frankovci's representatives obstructed the session of the Croatian Sabor held in the days after the assassination. They made noises, clattered and shouted and in this way made the session impossible. Because of this they were punished and excluded from the Sabor's next sessions.

After some days of excitement and demonstrations the political situation in Croatia calmed down. Life slowly returned back to normal. However, the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to the Serbian government on 23rd July 1914 provoked new excitement. Almost all the press in Croatia justified this step taken by the Viennese government. It became clear that there was going to be a war and that a peaceful solution to the crisis was not possible. When Serbia gave a negative reply to the ultimatum, Austro-Hungary broke diplomatic relations and her ambassador left Belgrade. Two days later war was declared.

At the same time the Croatian government took the necessary steps to organize a state of war. The Ban issued many orders limiting democracy, humanitarian and auxiliary services were founded, food-prices were frozen. While the Croats accepted the news of the war with visible enthusiasm, among a greater part of the Serbian population in Croatia there was an anti-Austrian feeling. For this reason the authorities didn't trust them and arrested many of them and sent them to prison-camps.

S A Ž E T A K

GRADANSKA HRVATSKA UOČI PRVOGA SVJETSKOG RATA (ODJEKATENTATA I ULTIMATUMA)

Autor prikazuje stanje u Građanskoj Hrvatskoj neposredno nakon atentata na austro-ugarskog prijestolonasljednika Franju Ferdinanda u Sarajevu 28. lipnja 1914. godine, pisanje hrvatskog tiska u svezi s ultimatumom Austro-Ugarske Srbiji te početka Prvoga svjetskog rata i prelazak s mirnodopskih na ratne uvjete života. U svojem je tekstu analizirao najvažnije hrvatske novine onoga doba (*Narodne novine, Obzor, Jutarnji list, Ilustrovani list, Hn'atska, Hrvat, Hrvatski pokret, Srbobran, Slobodna riječ* i dr.) i njihovo izvještavanje o atentatu: što su naglašavale u naslovima vijesti i izvješća o tom događaju, kakve su nekrologe (in memoriam) donosile na svojim stranicama te kako su izvještavale o žalobnim manifestacijama i antisrpskim demonstracijama u Hrvatskoj? Potom je prikazao događaje u Hrvatskom saboru i pokušaje nekih oporbenjaka da onemoguće komemorativnu sjednicu. Demonstracije i opstrukcije u Saboru vodili su frankovci, a njihove su novine prednjačile u osuđivanju atentata. Autor govori i o izvješćima koja nisu bila dostupna očima javnosti - o tajnim izvješćima o djelatnosti udruge Narodna odbrana koja su dolazila u Zemaljsku vladu u Zagrebu, a pokazivala su reakcije pučanstva, uglavnom srpske narodnosti, po cijeloj Hrvatskoj. Mnogi su Srbi povlađivali atentatorima i podržavali njihovo čin

izjavljujući čak da su trebali to učiniti i ranije, da treba ubiti i »starog ćelavog cara« ili pak »da je na moje, ja bih sve Hrvate i Mađare sasjekla na paprikaš«. Nakon mjesec dana Austro-Ugarska je uputila ultimatum Kraljevini Srbiji. Autor je analizirao reakcije nekih hrvatskih novina na ultimatum, a potom je prikazao kako je u Hrvatskoj doživljen početak Prvoga svjetskog rata. Vrlo se brzo prelazilo s uobičajenog načina življenja na ratne uvjete. Zabranjena je djelatnost mnogim udrugama, mnoge su novine prestale izlaziti, organizirana je humanitarna pomoć. U početku su se često pojavljivale glasine, primjerice, da je otrovana voda u zagrebačkom vodovodu, ili pak daje srušen most između Jasenovca i Dubice i si. Dok su Hrvati prihvatili vijest o izbijanju rata s oduševljenjem, među srpskim je pučanstvom u Hrvatskoj zavlдалo ustaničko raspoloženje.